

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-16, 18-23, 25 and 26 are pending in the present application; claims 8 and 24 having been canceled, and claims 1, 7, 11, 12, 14, and 18-20 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-3, 5-8, 11, 13-16, 18-21, 24 and 26 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitmarsh (US 2002/0101608) in view of Kato (US 6,141,111), claims 9, 10, 22 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitmarsh and Kato in view of Shima (JP 2001-209503), and claims 12 and 25 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitmarsh and Kato in view of Aoyagi et al. (US 2002/0032761). These rejection are respectfully traversed.

The independent claims have been amended to clarify the invention. Taking claim 1, for example, the information providing part recites that it is configured to store information including address of one or more of the image forming apparatuses which have been selected by associating information with functions of the selected one or more image forming apparatuses. Further, the print request part has been amended to recite that when a print request that has been received includes a name of print data and a function of an image forming apparatus from the client terminal, the print request part extracts one or more addresses of one or more of the plurality of image forming apparatus having the function included in the print request sent from the client terminal from among the selected one or more information forming apparatuses. Further, it is recited that the print request part distributes the print data and a print request to the one or more of the plurality of image forming apparatuses having the function by specifying the extracted one or more address.

This feature is supported by, for example, p. 24, line 8-p. 25, line 15, Figure 6, and p. 30, line 18-p. 31, line 18.

No prior art, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests these features. Claim 8 previously recited similar limitations to those which have been incorporated into independent claim 1, and accordingly, claim 8 has been canceled. The outstanding Office Action alleges at the bottom of p. 6 that Whitmarsh discloses the features of claim 8 and refers to paragraphs [0041]-[0042]. Moreover, the outstanding Office Action at the top of p. 7 references paragraph [0043] for the selection. However, paragraph [0043] does not disclose or suggest the feature of “the print request part extracts one or more addresses of the one or more of the plurality of image forming apparatuses having the function included in the print request... .” That is, the present invention extracts one or more of the apparatuses having the functions which are needed, whereas, this feature of extracting addresses corresponding to the functions is not performed or suggested by Whitmarsh.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 1 is respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

Independent claim 14 is patentable for similar reasons as claim 1 is patentable.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons the independent claims from which they depend are patentable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is requested.

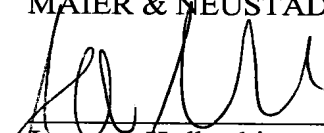
Respectfully submitted,

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